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Goldwater Writes CIA Director

Scorching Letter

The text of a letter, dated April 9 and made available yesterday, from Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, to CIA Director William J. Casey:

Dear Bill:

All this past weekend, I've been trying to figure out how I can most easily tell you my feelings about the discovery of the president having approved mining some of the harbors of Central America.

It gets down to one, little, simple phrase: I am pissed off!

I understand that you had briefed the House on this matter. I've heard that. Now, during the important debate we had last week and the week before, on whether we would increase funds for the Nicaragua program, we were

doing all right until a member of the committee charged that the president had approved the mining. I strongly denied that because I had never heard of it. I found out the next day that the CIA had, with the written approval of the president, engaged in such mining, and the approval came in February!

Bill, this is no way to run a railroad, and I find myself in a hell of a quandary. I am forced to apologize to the members of the Intelligence Committee because I did not know the facts on this. At the same time, my counterpart in the House did know.

The president has asked us to back his foreign policy. Bill, how can we back his foreign policy when we don't know what the hell he is doing? Lebanon, yes, we all knew that he sent troops over there. But mine the harbors in Nicaragua? This is an act violating international

law. It is an act of war. For the life of me, I don't see how we are going to explain it.

My simple guess is that the House is going to defeat this supplemental and we will not be in any position to put up much of an argument after we were not given the information we were entitled to receive; particularly, if my memory serves me correctly, when you briefed us on Central America just a couple of weeks ago. And the order was signed before that.

I don't like this. I don't like it one bit from the president or from you. I don't think we need a lot of lengthy explanations. The deed has been done and, in the future, if anything like this happens, I'm going to raise one hell of a lot of fuss about it in public.

Sincerely,

Barry Goldwater
Chairman